

Writing KSAO Statements

Course 93021



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ABOUT KSAO's

KSAO's: The attributes required to perform a job and which are generally demonstrated through qualifying experience, education or training.

Knowledge: An organized body of information, usually of a factual or procedural nature, which if applied, makes adequate performance on the job possible.

Example: Knowledge of Federal Regulations
Knowledge of filing systems
Knowledge of engineering principles and practices

Skill: The proficient manual, verbal, or mental manipulations of data, people, or things. A skill is observable, quantifiable, and measurable.

Example: Skill in typing
Skill in operating a motor vehicle

Ability: The power to perform an activity at the present time. Implied is a lack of discernible barriers, either physical or mental, to performing the activity.

Example: Ability to analyze problems
Ability to plan and organize work
Ability to communicate orally

Other Characteristics: A special, specific personality factor or aptitude, physical or mental trait needed to do the work that appears either in addition to or to a greater extent than what is generally expected of all employees in all jobs.

Example: Stress Tolerance – maintains composure when challenged in negotiating conferences.
Positive Attitude – maintains a positive attitude when dealing with challenging clients.

How are KSAO's developed?

KSAO's are developed through a job analysis, that is, a systematic procedure that involves gathering, documenting, and analyzing information to identify the major duties and the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics necessary to perform the duties of the job.

How are KSAO's evaluated?

KSAO's are evaluated against a crediting plan or rating guide. The guide provides the evaluation criteria and differentiates the quality of experience for each KSAO related to the job being filled. The crediting plan is the standard against which all eligible candidates are compared to determine the extent to which they possess those factors indicative of superior performance in the vacant position.

GETTING STARTED

Much of the material in this booklet covers describing your past work experience clearly and organizing your KSAO's. This involves the *packaging* of your education and experience. What is most important in your write-up is the *content* – the training and experience that you would bring to the job for which you are applying. **How you describe your past experience is not relevant if you do not have related training and experience to describe. You can't manufacture KSAO's that you don't have, but you CAN increase your knowledge of a subject.**

The first step is to find out all you can about the jobs that look interesting to you. Your goals are to learn:

- 1) what people in the job do on a daily basis (you want to make sure that you would want to have this type of job); and,
- 2) what past work experience and skills are necessary to bring to the job.

HOW:

- 1) Talk to people that currently hold the type of job you're interested in seeking. Ask them what training and experience they had when they applied for that particular position and how they see the job changing in the future.
- 2) Talk to supervisors of positions in which you would like to work. Ask them what KSAO's they look for when they are selecting someone for a job in their organization and if they see changes occurring that will make other knowledge, skills and abilities important.
- 3) Visit the FAA's job website: <http://jobs.faa.gov>. The website houses current job openings within the FAA. The PD library houses automated standards position descriptions for a variety of careers within the FAA and may be accessed via <http://interweb.faa.gov/>. Also, several FAA Human Resource offices in other regions have a variety of career enhancing information on their respective web sites. Another good source is "The Resume Place" website: www.resume-place.com.
- 4) Or, visit with the Human Resource Management Service Center staff if you don't have access to Intranet.
- 5) Discuss training opportunities with your supervisor and division training coordinator.
- 6) Ask about opportunities to be mentored by someone in the career field in which you are interested.

When you feel that your experience and training make you a good candidate for the position, you may want to begin completing an application and brainstorm on a variety of KSAO's, as much of the information will stay constant regardless of the vacancy announcement. Most KSAO's for standardized job series are similar. If you have a major portion of the KSAO's completed at the time the vacancy comes out, you will have more time to fine tune the parts that are most applicable to the vacancy.

KNOW YOUR MPP ANNOUNCEMENT

Determine whether or not you are within the **area of consideration**. The area of consideration describes the organization or geographic area from which applications will be accepted.

The **closing date** is the last day applications will be accepted in the Human Resources Office for that particular announcement.

Read the **duties** paragraph carefully to determine whether this job is really for you. If so, use verbs and nouns that demonstrate your ability to perform these duties.

Determine if you meet the length, type and quality of experience requirements, education and/or training requirements, licensure, medical and/or physical requirements or any other **qualifications** identified.

Double check that you have included *all* of the necessary **application forms**. Leaving one out may prevent further consideration of your application.

Read the **KSAO statements** carefully. Prepare a one-page, typed statement on each KSAO. If necessary, adjust your margins or font ensuring readability, yet limiting each KSAO to no more than one page.

Kathryn Kraemer Troutman, founder and president of the Resume Place and author of "The Federal Resume Guidebook" says the biggest mistake that applicants make is that "they don't read and interpret the vacancy announcement well," and they then compound the error by NOT writing application materials to suit the announcement. Her advice: "Be realistic about your expectations. Make sure you meet the basic qualifications of the job and that your qualifications, knowledge, skills, and abilities are clear in your application." Check yourself: Of the many hats you wear, which fits in the best with this particular KSAO?



MPP PROCEDURES

PROCESS:

1. VACANCY ANNOUNCED
2. APPLICANTS FILE
3. EVALUATION OF QUALIFICATIONS
4. APPLICATIONS MAY BE RATED AND RANKED (MANAGEMENT DECISION)
5. SELECTING OFFICIAL REVIEWS APPLICATIONS; MAY CHOOSE TO INTERVIEW SOME, ALL OR NONE OF THE APPLICANTS
6. SELECTION MADE (OR IN SOME CASES, NO SELECTION MADE)

WHAT HAPPENS WITH YOUR JOB APPLICATION:

	Application/Resume	KSAO Response
How is it used?	To show that you meet the specialized experience requirement. It's either "Yes, you do." Or, "No, you don't."	If you meet the specialized experience requirement, your KSAO responses are compared against a crediting plan. You earn a numerical score which is compared against others who also applied for the position. Those who score highest are "best qualified" and referred to the selecting official. The list referred offers a group of top candidates in no particular order.
When is it especially important?	When it is required on the announcement (most of the time).	When there will likely be a large number of competitors for the position.
What do you include?	All work experience, (identify any temporary promotions or details). Work experience in private industry, military, etc. Volunteer experience is also creditable. Treat it as though it were an actual job.	Describe duties you have performed (Federal, military, private industry, community organizations, education/training) which demonstrate your possession of the specific KSAO you are addressing.
Things to think about as you complete the form.	Do not just type your position description for your duties. Write about what YOU do. Do not assume that the person reading your application will know the duties of your job. Break down major functions of job by percentage of time	Highlight experience which shows initiative, innovation, independence, leadership, enhanced processes you have developed, what you have done

	performing each function.	beyond what was required.
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WORK EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST

WORK EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST

As you think about ways to fully describe your past work experience, here are some suggestions:

__ What was the scope and effect of the work?

Did you quantify it in your description? How large was the budget? How many clients or customers were served? What was the impact of your work (throughout your facility, region, agency)?

__ How complex was the job?

Were the answers to your questions readily available or did you have to do research? Did you make independent decisions with conflicting or non-existent information? Did you develop standard operating procedures for others to follow? Were you the expert that others consulted when they ran into new or difficult problems?

__ What guidelines did you follow?

Were your questions usually answered in guidelines? Or, did you need to interpret guidelines to your situation? Make decisions with limited data? Did you have to adapt to new, sometimes sketchy, guidelines?

__ What knowledge was required in the position?

Knowledge of federal personnel regulations. Knowledge of the federal budget cycle and its impact on our division budget submission and reporting requirements.

__ What was the level of supervisory control?

Did you independently perform your duties and apply your own judgment?

__ What were the personal contacts you made and the purpose of the contact?

Did you communicate with supervisors, division managers, contractors, the general public, peers in other regions or headquarters? Was the purpose to convey information, explain complex regulations, persuade, negotiate?

The Three-Step Process for Writing KSAO Statements

1. Pre-Writing

If you:

- A. Understand the process
- B. Do your research
- C. Do some serious brainstorming, and
- D. Organize your thoughts and information

The rest is a piece of cake.



2. Writing

Writing is the easy part.
(As long as you did the proper pre-writing.)

3. Re-Writing

Finalize your package, and,
Have someone proofread it for you.

STEP 1: PRE-WRITING

BRAINSTORMING

Psychologists tell us that the left side of the brain is logical, verbally oriented, organized, precise, and analytical. *“Left Brainers”* will tend to make an outline using letters (A, B, C., etc.) followed by numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.).

By contrast, the right side of our brain is the creative side; it recalls sights, sounds, symbols, and ideas are often the result of flashes of insight. *“Right Brainers”* prefer pictures to words.

Brainstorming for the logical, organized, and analytical: *“Left Brainers”* (see example on page 10)

1. Start by individually listing each KSAO at the top of separate sheets of paper.
2. Then "brainstorm" all the *REALLY IMPORTANT STUFF* and write this under the appropriate KSAO statement.
3. Don't worry about the details, like dates, numbers, etc. You can fill these in later - just get the information down in writing.
4. Keep these statements with you for a couple of days and every time you think of something, add it to your list.

Mind Mapping for the creative: *“Right Brainers”* (see example on page 11)

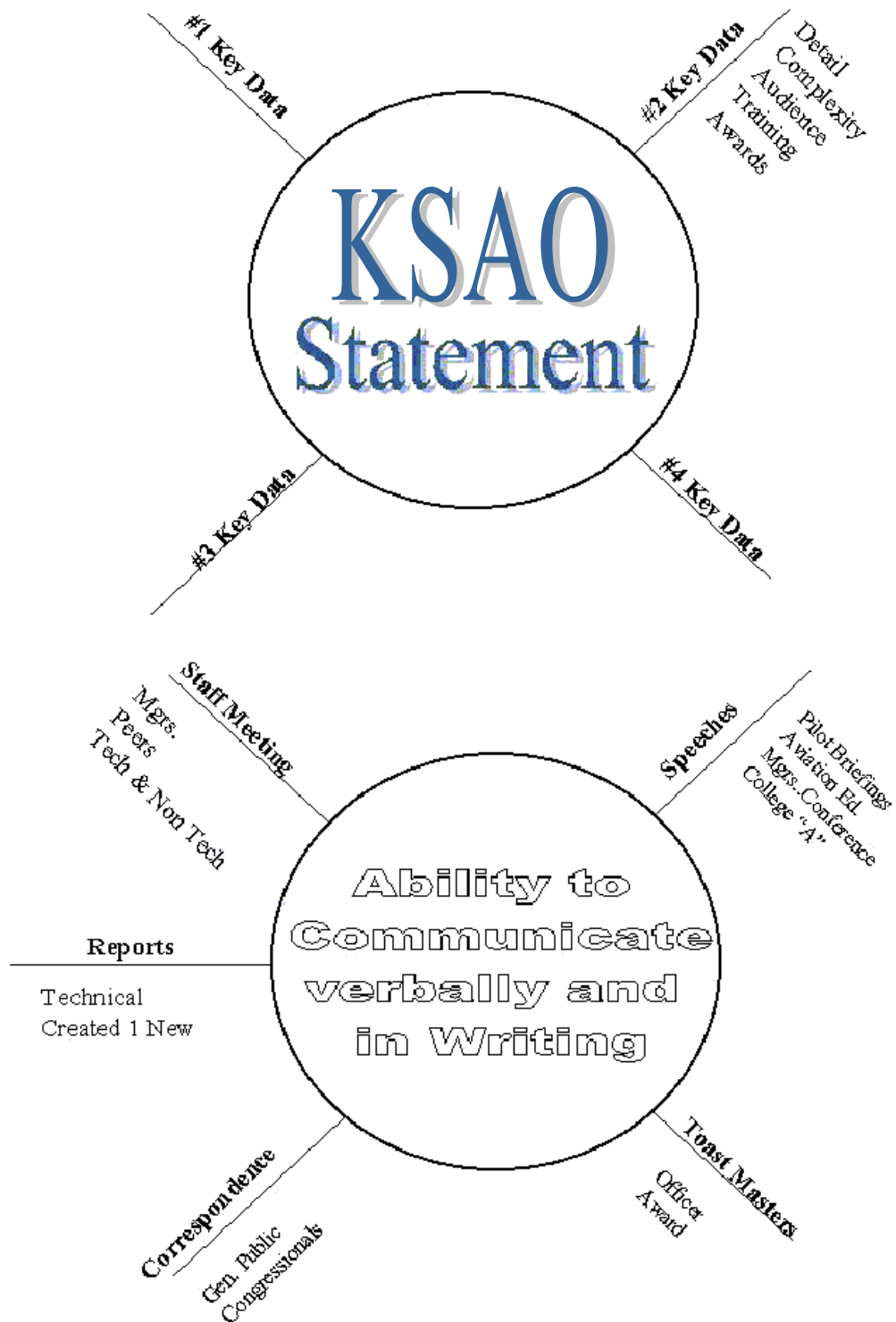
1. Draw a circle and begin with the KSAO statement in the center.
2. Draw branches out of the circle with key data.
3. Branch off the main branches with examples, details, etc.
4. Use key words only.
5. Allow free flow.
6. Use images, symbols etc.
7. Keep these mind maps with you for a couple of days and every time you think of something, add it to your map.

BRAINSTORMING SAMPLE

KSAO: Ability to Communicate Verbally and In Writing

- A. Member of Toastmasters.
 - 1. Received Toastmasters Award for outstanding presentation.
- B. Reports - written and verbal.
 - 1. Developed new report form – tell what was unique about this.
 - 2. Management relies on my reports to make operational decisions.
- C. Wrote two standard operating procedures (SOP's).
- D. Two articles published in the INTERCOM newsletter.
- E. Correspondence - congressionals, general public, staff memos.
 - 1. Reduced the number of congressional complaints backlogged from 30 per year to approximately 5 due to new procedures I implemented.
 - 2. Initiated a new correspondence procedure for AF SMO managers drafting memos for AF manager's signature, which resulted in mail leaving the regional office on an average of one day earlier.
- F. Telephones - daily, HQ, Field, Regional Office.
 - 1. Technical & general questions answered.
 - 2. Handle irate callers and resolve problems.
- G. Speeches (briefings & talks) to pilots, at conferences & staff meetings.
- H. Brief peers and management on operations.
- I. Briefed management team on our role in the NAS plan.
- J. PTA member - write reports and make presentations to parent groups.
 - 1. Address parents' concerns
 - 2. Persuaded parents to try a new fund raiser this year - doubled our earnings this year compared to last.
- K. College Courses: Speech - "A"; Technical Writing - "B."
- L. FAA course: Briefings and Presentations Course; 24 hours, July 2000.

MIND MAPPING SAMPLE



REALLY IMPORTANT STUFF TO PUT IN YOUR KSAO

- ➔ **Range of Experience:** One agency or many? Track budget for branch or division? Keep one database or several? Work on one type of equipment or many?
- ➔ **Complexity:** Write general or technical reports? Work on general equipment or complex, intricate systems which impacts safety or some large group or area? What guidelines, regulation, resources do you use? Lack of guidance can be important too.
- ➔ **Range of Contacts:** Deal with peers or with many managers, HQ personnel, industry, politicians, general public? Who were some of your contacts last week, last year?
- ➔ **Impact:** What is the impact of your work on office operations? region? agency? Were you responsible for a new, more efficient way of doing business that saved time, money, or improved the safety of the flying public?
- ➔ **Supervision:** Do you sign reports yourself or does your supervisor have to see them? Does supervisor travel regularly, requiring you to work without supervision and make many decisions? Do you "act" in place of absent supervisor? Have you written letters for managers and not have them returned for revision?
- ➔ **Proud Achievements:** Did you do an exceptional job under adverse conditions? Did you get a superior report or project out on a short deadline? Show initiative and creativity? What training or education have you completed that relates? Do you have any volunteer, community, club-related activities that relate?
- ➔ **Recognition:** Include formal and informal recognition. Include high performance ratings, "on-the-spots," "thank you" notes, nominations for awards (even if not selected.) Look at the contents of these and use some of the words. Were you ever in the newspaper or Intercom for something special?
- ➔ **Areas of Expertise:** What are you really good at? What do you know best? Were you ever someone's hero for the day - even though it seemed like a little deal to you?
- ➔ **Trendy Work:** Mention whatever the current trend is. For example, experience in developing and coordinating Model Work Environment initiatives; participation in a workgroup dealing with Business Process Improvement (BPI), etc. The fact that you are involved in and support current agency trends may be important to a selecting official.

ORGANIZE YOUR KSAO's

- ✂ Now, go back through everything you have brainstormed and draw a line through anything that clearly does not apply, does not seem important in light of other more complex duties you have performed, or does not seem to show your skill at the level you wish to have exhibited.
- ✂ Take out any duplication. If you wrote ten marvelously succinct reports, make that one entry - you may wish to use the number "ten" or may state "many" or "various."



In a flower garden, we pull weeds and some of the weaker flowers, too, so that the others stand out and the garden looks better. The same applies to KSAO statements.

- ✎ Number each item in the order in which you wish to use them. Put your biggest, best stuff up front. Hook the reader.
- ✎ Keep your audience in mind - spell out acronyms at least once.
- ✎ Don't assume anyone knows anything about you or your accomplishments. You can only get credit for what you write. Raters may not use personal knowledge when rating applications.
- ✎ Be specific. Don't say, "As the only representative in the area, I did everything." If you kept the budget, supervised others, conducted training, introduced guest speakers, arranged conferences, etc. SAY SO!

Review, Review, Review

- ✓ By this point, you should have:
- ✓ Researched everything about the position.
- ✓ Brainstormed everything you can think of.
- ✓ Weeded out the unrelated and weaker material and left the strongest and best stuff you've got.
- ✓ Organized everything that's left in order of importance.

Step 2: WRITING

The Easy Part

Remember, you are starting with a list of ideas in approximate order of importance.

Lock yourself away from the phones and other distractions.

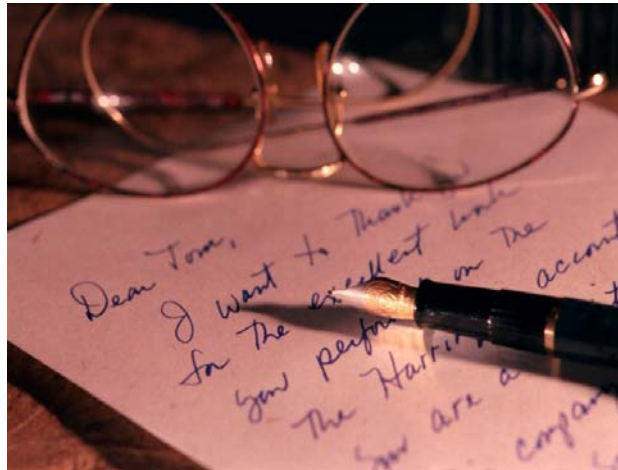
Write everything about each item on your list.

Do not bother checking dates, titles, etc. -- all that can be added later.

Do not worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar, word choice, styles, etc.

Make yourself write until you can write no more -- until you have covered everything you can think of.

Now, lay everything aside for a day at least. You need distance to be objective.











See? Wasn't that easy?

Step 3: RE-WRITING








"All effective writers know writing is rewriting."

Re-writing, or editing, involves reviewing the rough draft, reworking the words, phrases, and sentences and getting your ideas into the best shape possible. You may revise several times.




A. Adding material:

-  Education and training course titles, hours, and dates
-  Add specific examples
-  Add transitions
-  Definitions or explanatory phrases, meanings to acronyms
-  Titles to order numbers
-  Strong, action verbs
-  Numbers to quantify dollar amounts, percentages, units
-  Time (hours, days, months, years)

B. Delete:

-  Repetitions within the KSAO (If appropriate, repeat in other KSAO statements, but don't say, "See KSAO #2.")
-  Repetitive words - use synonyms instead
-  Negatives and negativism's. Keep things positive sounding
-  Clichés
-  Awkward phrasing - rephrase it
-  Anything that is not directly related to the KSAO
-  Anything that would need a translator

C. Rearrange material:

-  Does something fit better in another KSAO? Move it there.
-  Mention your main idea first in the paragraph
-  Do the ideas flow logically?

Step 3: RE-WRITING (CONT'D)

"I'm probably the world's worst writer, but I'm the world's best re-writer."

James Michener, novelist

D. Check wording and point of view:



Mark Twain wrote, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning bug and lightening."

- ✍ Use first person: *I, me, my*. Or, if you know *teamwork* is critical to the job you're applying for, talk of your contributions to the team.
- ✍ Never copy the wording from a job or level description.

E. Check mechanics (get help if needed):

- ✍ Spelling
- ✍ Punctuation
- ✍ Grammar
- ✍ Adequate margins

F. Opening Sentence

- ✍ Hook your reader. List the best, biggest, most interesting thing first.

G. Read the entire KSAO

- ✍ Impressed? Sound convincing? Accurately reflects all you have accomplished?
- ✍ Do you have all your best and most important stuff on paper?



IMAGINE . . . that a very important person wanted to know what you do, but only had a couple minutes to listen. You want to let this person know what you do and how your work impacts the world. He/she is in a hurry and wants a clear and concise answer. Whatever you would say in this conversation would be good in your KSAO.

DO'S AND DON'TS

This is NOT a complete listing, but some suggestions for do's and don'ts.....

DO'S	DON'TS
Carefully read the vacancy announcement and note the required KSAO's.	Don't use words from your position description in writing your KSAO's.
Describe <u>your</u> experience and emphasize the skills you used that relate to the KSAO.	Don't describe work of others or that of the organization.
Use action verbs and statements.	Don't exaggerate. Don't be humble.
Include all current experience related to KSAO, whether paid or volunteer.	Don't omit church, community, or club work.
Arrange all your experience in logical order (e.g. chronological).	Don't cross-reference items in your KSAO's and your application.
List education and training and identify title of course, hours, and relationship to KSAO.	Don't provide just course titles or degrees received.
Include awards, month and year received, a brief description as to why you received the award, and how it relates to the KSAO.	Don't just state the kind of award and when it was received.
Type all information, or write so legibly that every single word is clearly readable.	Don't make it challenging for the reader - it probably won't get full credit if it cannot be read.
Tell what you <u>do</u> know and <u>can</u> do; not what you <u>don't</u> know or <u>cannot</u> do.	Don't attach unsolicited material such as letters of recommendation, training certificates, copies of awards or examples of your work.

ACTION STATEMENTS

Interpersonal Communications

- Negotiates and resolves inter-personal conflicts constructively.
- Builds rapport & trust by demonstrating sensitivity & respect for others.
- Listens actively to others and responds with empathy.
- Expresses ideas clearly and persuasively.
- Forms collaborative relationships.

Technical

- Meets technical job requirements effectively.
- Researches thoroughly.
- Writes effectively.
- Organizes and analyzes data.
- Understands products and services and continuously updates.

Leadership

- Influences through setting example.
- Motivates, challenges, and empowers others to develop new ideas and competencies.
- Thinks strategically about the future and adapts effectively to changing needs and priorities.
- Demonstrates initiative and drive and acts decisively.
- Utilizes effective presentation and group facilitation skills, encouraging participation and involvement of others.

Task/Project Planning

- Sets priorities & establishes realistic goals.
- Plans and organizes workflow.
- Identifies necessary resources.
- Anticipates problems and develops contingency plans.

Task/Project Management

- Manages multiple projects and tasks simultaneously.
- Utilizes all appropriate resources.
- Modifies priorities and plans as needed.
- Makes and executes decisions.
- Follows up on commitments.

Team Work

- Works proactively with team to meet agreed upon goals and expectations.
- Provides others with information and resources.
- Seeks coaching and development.
- Works to build consensus and resolve conflict within the team.
- Listens to the ideas of others & provides constructive feedback.

ACTION STATEMENTS (cont'd)

Quality

- Works collaboratively with customer and makes meeting customer requirements the highest priority.
- Delivers work error free, on time, and within budget.
- Uses quality concepts to make plans to prevent and solve problems.
- Sets measurable standards for quality and constantly monitors progress toward meeting these standards.
- Strives for continuous improvement.

Innovation/Creativity

- Takes risks & challenge status quo.
- Develops innovative solutions and strategies.
- Values diversity.
- Experiments with new methods and approaches.
- Continually explores ways to generate new business opportunities.

Client/Customer Orientation

- Constantly searches for ways to add value to organization's products and services.
- Identifies and focuses on developing key target customer/markets.
- Understands client/customer needs and assures that product & service specifications fill these needs.
- Follows up customer requests in a timely manner.
- Understands internal & external customers' strengths, vulnerabilities, and strategies.

Make an asset of yourself!

Action Statements put you on top!



SAMPLE KSAO FORMAT

Your Name, Social Security Number

Announcement Number:

KSAO #1: *Ability to plan, organize, and evaluate work projects.*

Work-Related

Take each job you have held starting with your current job and work back. Look at the various duties you have performed. What tasks required you to plan, organize, and evaluate? Did you plan your daily work by knowing the organizational goals and setting priorities? Were you a team leader? Did you complete or review reports and make comparisons or identify trends? Did you ever have to review progress on tasks, ensure completeness, accuracy, and timeliness?

Non-Work Related

Review everything you have done outside your jobs - volunteer work, clubs, church, professional organizations, scouting, sports, homemaking, family demands, neighborhood projects, etc. Explain those activities that you planned, organized, and evaluated. What were the results? Show the level of difficulty on your unpaid, volunteer work.

Education/Training/Awards/Honors

List any education and training courses you have had that relate to this KSAO. i.e., management courses, statistics, etc. State the number of hours, the date you attended, and your grade.

Include applicable awards and give month and year it was received along with a brief description as to why you received the award. Use some of the words from the award itself.

Don't forget Outstanding or Exceptional Performance Ratings. Were you ever selected for a competitive type of training course, i.e., Prospective Women Managers? Were you listed in "Who's Who Among Students In College?" Were you ever written up in the community newspaper or Intercom for something related to this KSAO?

SAMPLE TRAINING FORMAT

Systems Thinking	02/06/01	32 hrs. (CMD)
Women's Executive Leadership (WEL)	01/08/01	1 yr; USDA Grad School
Leadership Development, LDP-1	05/23/00	60 hrs. (CMD)
Labor Management Relations	03/29/00	35 hrs. (CMD)
Covey: 7-Habits of Highly Eff. People	05/19/99	28 hrs.
Managing Change	02/10/99	32 hrs. (CMD)
Small Purchases Contracts	10/6/98	32 hrs. (GSA)
How To Build a Better Team	04/4/98	8 hrs.
FEB; Women's History-Workshops	03/15/97	8 hrs.
Black History - Workshops	02/2/97	8 hrs.
Staff Specialist	01/1/97	Correspondence
Grievance Examiner Orientation	11/21/96	16 hrs.
Prospective Women Mgrs. Seminar	10/30/96	70 hrs.
Advanced Excel Spreadsheet	10/6/96	24 hrs.
Intro to OATS	09/9/96	8 hrs.
Advanced Microsoft Word	09/2/96	16 hrs.
Microsoft Word	08/19/96	16 hrs.
Excel Spreadsheet	07/5/96	16 hrs.
Staff Work Course #01524	12/18/95	72 hrs.
Intro to Emergency Readiness	10/12/95	Correspondence
CPR	10/11/95	4 hrs.
Basic Personnel Mgt. Course	04/22/95	Correspondence
D-Base II	03/1/95	16 hrs.
Statistics Workshop	02/2/95	8 hrs.
Staffing and Placement	11/30/94	80 hrs.

Independent Studies:

B.A. Degree: Human Resource Mgt.	10/92	Univ. of MO: Kansas City
Sign Language	3/00	36 hrs.
U.S. Power Squadron Seamanship	9/24/99	24 hrs.
Outward Bound Adventure (Outdoor skills: mountain backpacking, camping & canoeing)	7/2/98	8 days/7 nights

Note: Independent studies may have nothing to do with the job but show outside interests that may be shared by the selecting official. It also shows motivation, interest in continuous growth and development; and, possibly, other skills that may serve the organization.

SAMPLE HONORS AND AWARDS FORMAT

Honor or Award	Date Received	Reason
Special Act/Service Award	08/01/01	Give a brief description for all honors, awards & letters - just a couple of sentences. May use some words from the awards & letters.
Quality Step Increase	06/25/00	
Exceptional Performance Rating/Award	12/15/99	
Special Act or Performance Award	11/01/99	
Exceptional Performance Rating	12/04/98	
Special Act or Service Award	09/11/98	
Performance Award	08/28/97	
Special Act or Service Award	07/19/97	
Nominated Federal Employee of the Year (Administrative Category)	06/17/01	Even if you were not selected, mention nominations.
On-the-Spot Award	01/22/01	
On-the-Spot Award	07/25/00	
Letters of Commendation	04/25/01	
Letters of Appreciation	01/10/01	
	09/21/00	
	05/18/00	
	07/27/99	
	04/28/99	
	02/13/99	
	08/09/98	
	02/26/98	

IN SUMMARY

(OTHER WAYS TO LOOK AT IT . . .)

Turn the KSAO into a question:

Ask yourself:

- Do I have the ability to plan, organize, and evaluate work projects?
- What makes me think I do?
- When responding, keep in mind that the evidences that you would provide after “because . . .” will best serve your response to the KSAO.

Do not write a thesis on the subject of the KSAO:

“Knowledge of the budget tracking methods is important because . . .” This doesn’t tell anything about your experiences with this KSAO.

Do provide justification of your self-evaluate of your ability:

“I have an extensive knowledge of Federal contracting laws.” Provide examples of a wide range of contracts and situations with which you have worked. Justify your self-evaluation of your ability by providing concrete examples of the level of complexity associated with that job element.

Do think about the KSAO’s in relationship to the job you are applying for:

Give examples of your experience in the KSAO’s that are most related to the job for which you are applying.

Draw your best evidences of experience or training from all your experience:

Federal jobs, private industry employment, military, volunteer work, school, etc.

As you write your KSAO’s, include:

- When the activity took place
- Who was involved; and, if a team activity, what your contribution was
- Results – what happened because of your efforts. Describe what your efforts were. Note recognition received as a result of these efforts – awards or commendations received, performance appraisals that referenced the activity, letters of appreciation from customers, etc.
- Refer to page 12, “Really Important Stuff to Put in Your KSAO” and use active tense verbs.

IN SUMMARY (OTHER WAYS TO LOOK AT IT . . .)

Do give examples that will show:

Initiative: saw a problem and resolved it

Innovation: developed a new system; used software for a new purpose

Leadership: mentored less experienced employees

Complexity: challenging times on the job

Scope: the variety and breadth of work in personnel budget, electronics, etc.

Teamwork: were you part of a highly communicative group, whose members possessed different skills and abilities, shared a common purpose, and worked together to achieve clearly identified goals?

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) designed and recommends using the CCAR Model for writing and demonstrating KSAO's:

Following is an example KSAO response using the CCAR Model addressing "Ability to plan, organize and manage projects."

"In January 1995, following notification that the Aviation Education Program would receive a dramatically reduced budget (**context**), I recognized that important programs would be discontinued, including the Aerospace Education Career (ACE) Camps (**challenge**) which provided a summer learning experience for minorities and economically disadvantaged youth in the Central Region. As the program manager, I took the initiative to communicate the situation with the state aeronautical commissions and the local universities sponsoring aeronautical curricula (**action**). I addressed the need for developing partnerships in meeting the goals identified by the ACE Camp and highlighted the success of past camps and the benefits awarded each respective entity. As a result of my initiative and leadership, one state and several high level institutions elected to continue the ACE Camps at their respective locations with no monetary obligations from the FAA (**result**)."

Use the CCAR Model for writing KSAO's

Context – what is the issue that addresses the KSAO

Challenge – what challenge did you face addressing this issue

Action – what action did you take in addressing this issue

Results – what was a direct outcome of the action you took



CRITIQUE EXERCISE

John Doe is applying for a job where one of the KSAO's is "Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing." His KSAO statement appears on the next page.

Using the following rating, score John's KSAO's:

- ⇒ **Superior** (4 points): At this level, the applicant demonstrates possession of the KSAO such that all the job functions of the position requiring this KSAO could be performed well after only a brief period of orientation to minor aspects of the job. Experience shows initiative and innovation.
- ⇒ **Satisfactory** (3 points): At this level, the applicant demonstrates possession of the KSAO which would enable him/her to effectively carry out most of the job functions requiring this KSAO with a normal orientation and a reasonable period of time. Experience shows solid journeyman level abilities.
- ⇒ **Barely Acceptable** (2 points): At this level, the applicant shows potential to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job which require this KSAO after a normal orientation and under normal supervision.
- ⇒ **No Evidence** (0 points): At this level, the applicant shows no possession of this KSAO.

Read the entire KSAO, then choose a partner and discuss the following:

1. Do John's name and announcement number appear at the top?
2. Does the first sentence or paragraph grab your attention? If not, what might come first instead?
3. Is it written in the first person - I, me, my?
4. Are all acronyms understood?
5. How does this KSAO statement compare to the *Really Important Stuff to Put in Your KSAO?* (see page 12). Give an example for each.

CRITIQUE EXERCISE (CONT'D)

John Doe, SS# 500-00-0000

Announcement #: ACE-AAC-99-000-00000

KSAO #1: Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

As a Personnel Assistant for the Human Resources Division, I communicate verbally with the three Labor Relations Specialists and contacts outside the agency to reserve rooms for arbitration hearings as well as arrange the services of court reporters to record the hearings. I convey the status of grievances to the appropriate personnel within the Division. I prepare inquiries and responses to customers referencing position descriptions. This is typically accomplished through cc:mail. I prepare the monthly Labor Relations Newsletter, reviewing it for grammar, format and consistency. I routinely finalize letters and memoranda concerning grievances and unfair labor practices for Labor Relations Specialists.

As an Administrative Support Clerk for the Personnel Office, I conducted briefings on the steps for completing personnel logs. Presentations were approximately one hour in length, for which I used Power Point. The audience was primarily Supervisory Air Traffic Control Specialists. I advised managers and supervisors on changes in pay and leave regulations, labor contracts and documentation.

I served as editor of the quarterly Renton Highlands Community Council newsletter. I researched pending changes in zoning, road construction, residential and commercial developments and wrote articles independently.

I attended the ATCSA in Oklahoma City, OK., and was trained in air traffic and inter-phone communication skills.

My efforts in conducting crew briefings on alternative work schedules and sign-in and sign-off forms resulted in the reduction of incorrect and missing data on the forms, for which I received an Outstanding Performance Rating.

YOUR TURN EXERCISE

Now it's your turn to write a KSAO statement and have the opportunity to get some help or other ideas on it while attending this workshop.

1. Choose one KSAO statement. You may wish to write one that you see listed often in MPP announcements, or one that you have had difficulty writing in the past.
2. Review the *Really Important Stuff to Put in Your KSAO* on page 12, the Do's and Don'ts on page 17, the Action Statements on pages 18-19, the helpful hints on pages 23-24 and use "Word Power" on pages 31-32.
3. Begin writing your KSAO statement. You will have 15 to 20 minutes to do this.
4. When you finish writing, choose a partner and switch KSAO statements. You will have 10 minutes (5 minutes each) to share the following comments.
 - ➔ Critique your partner's KSAO statement according to the criteria in the Critique Exercise on page 25. What was done well? What suggestions might you have?
 - ➔ Do you have knowledge of other activities, experience, and training or outside work your partner has participated in that he/she might include in this KSAO statement?
 - ➔ What recommendations would you offer your partner?

Common KSAO Statements

Ability to plan, organize, evaluate work activities independently, make quick decisions, and determine priorities.

Ability to initiate, analyze, and evaluate information to recommend operations and procedural changes.

Ability to use automation software and hardware to input, retrieve, review, and analyze information for a variety of sources.

Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

Ability to analyze, evaluate information and prepare comprehensive reports.

Ability to work with other employees and customers effectively.

Ability to supervise others.

Knowledge of functions, organizations and programs of ----.

Knowledge of business theories, practices, and concepts including statistical analysis, procurement, organizational/change management, human behavior, and project management.

Skills in problem solving and analyzing organizational issues.

Ability to apply interpersonal skills in the work environment.

SAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE KSAO STATEMENTS

Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing:

Poor Response:

I am good at communicating. I talk with co-workers and customers daily, on a variety of topics. My skills can be verified during the interview.

I have written many letters and papers that communicate information to readers. I am a good writer and have no trouble making sure that what I write says what I want it to.

FG-5/7 Example Response:

I have completed course work in Public Speaking and Debate as an undergraduate student at the University of Kansas. I have received training in clear and concise communication as well as participation in the local Toastmaster organization. I have held two receptionist positions, where my communication skills were utilized when handling multiple calls and visitors. One of the positions was in an office dealing with international customers and suppliers. Enunciation and sentence structure were vital for effective communication with these callers.

As a student at the University of Kansas, I was required to produce a minimum of four research papers a quarter. These were technical papers that support a thesis statement, providing detailed documentation to justify the hypothesis. In my senior year, I wrote a 25 page report on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, which was graded a 98 and was published in the local magazine for HR professionals.

FG-9/11 Example Response:

As a Retirement and Benefits Officer for the Federal Aviation Administration, I am called on to explain highly technical information related to the laws, policies and regulations regarding retirement, life insurance benefits, health benefits, reasonable accommodations and workers compensation. I must gauge the comprehension level of the receiver and deliver the information in easily understood language and terminology.

SAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE KSAO STATEMENTS

Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing: (cont'd)

For the past seven years, I have been the editor of the FAA Intercom, preparing text and graphics for publishing. I have written and edited materials on a wide variety of subjects such as medicine, security, personal interest and political information. I write to match the appropriate level of complexity for my target audience. I have written technical manuals and published a collection of essays and several poems. I am a member of the Kansas Writers Guild and have been a guest speaker at the Government Publication Writers Seminar.

FG-12/13 Example Response:

In every position I have held, skills in oral communication have been vital to my success. As a Personnel Management Specialist, I have been required to present technical and complex information in an understandable manner to both internal and external customers. I chair meetings with Division Managers providing guidance and information on Human Resources policies, regulations and changes in procedures. I prepare recommendations and deliver briefing papers to senior executives, addressing issues in a thorough and favorable manner. I served as a Labor Relations Specialist, conveying sensitive information regarding methods, procedures and policies related to conduct and discipline in a way that was easily understood. I have received advanced training in public speaking and frequently represent my division in public HR forums.

As a Program Manager, I prepare detailed written reports responding to requests from Headquarters and upper management. I have created procedural manuals and agency directives that have been adopted and are now standard across the agency. These documents are clear, concise and contain highly technical information, which could be vital to the safety of the well being of the flying public. My manual on Methods for Federal Air Marshall's provides detailed guidelines for securing individuals while safely searching for contraband. The manual provides thorough descriptions of unusual and innovative methods for concealment and has resulted in a 73% increase in the seizure of contraband since its implementation.

WORD POWER

Use verbs in the active tense that describe the tasks you performed

ADMINISTRATION	AUDITING	CHANGE	MANAGEMENT
Administer	Analyze	Compared	Adjudicate
Furnish	Assemble	Create	Analyze
Justify	Assign	Design	Anticipate
Insure	Changed	Establish	Approve
Process	Compare	Improve	Directed
Purchase	Evaluate	Modify	Established
Receive	Recommend	Stimulate	Evaluate
Reject	Report	Upgrade	Manage
Shipped	Review		Organize
Stored			Plan
Supplied			
DECISION MAKING	COMMUNICATION	SUPERVISION	RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
Accept	Contact	Assess	Analyze
Approve	Critique	Assign	Compiled
Consider	Display	Counsel	Defined
Decide	Inform	Define	Determine
Determine	Interpret	Delegate	Develop
Solve	Issue	Demonstrate	Evaluate
Terminate	Speak	Develop	Identify
Test	Testify	Encourage	Investigate
Monitor	Write	Report	Prepare
Measure	Cooperate	Supervise	Propose
Forecast	Coordinate	Maintain	Recommend
	Negotiate		Research
	Represent		Review
	Mediate		Track
			Troubleshoot

WORD POWER

Avoid verbs that are vague

... work effectively with ...
... my work involves ...
... prepare ...
... my position requires that ...
... I'm closely involved with ...
... assist in the ...
... perform a variety of duties related to ...

Don't use passive verbs

... was selected to ...
... was in charge of ...
... was required to ...
... was responsible for ...

Write clearly and concisely

YES ...

alter
conclude
discuss
acquire
for \$1 million
to improve efficiency in
because we downsized
after the meeting
often
replica
served as the supervisor
I compiled data
I tracked an annual budget

by reducing the processing

I was a technical expert for

NO ...

make alteration
come to a conclusion
have a discussion
make acquisitions
in the amount of \$1 million
in order to improve efficiency
due to the fact that we downsized
subsequent to the meeting
on numerous occasions
exact replica
served in the capacity of the supervisor
compilation of the required data
tracking an annual budget of \$250,000
was necessary
by means of reduction of the processing
time by – days, I saved ...
I was a technical expert in the area of new
power systems installation ...

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Acting Assignments: Temporary assignment of managerial, supervisory, or team lead responsibilities to an employee.

Collateral Duties: Assignment of duties outside an employee's normal range of responsibilities which provide a broadening experience.

Committee/Task Force Participation: Involvement in employee groups or special emphasis.

Detail: A temporary assignment to another position, work unit, branch, division or office.

Discussion Groups: Groups arranged with co-workers for the purpose of researching and discussing technical, managerial or supervisory skill areas.

Job Redesign: Assignment of new responsibilities to a position for the purpose of utilizing an employee's natural abilities or interests.

Job Rotation: Temporary reassignment of duties from another position, but within the same occupational area, to the employee's current position in order to enhance the employee's experience.

Professional Organizations: Membership in groups comprised of representatives from specific occupations or meetings to develop specific skills offering opportunities for employees to develop a variety of organizational and leadership skills.

Shadow Assignment: Accompanying a technical or managerial employee for a brief period to better understand the type of work being performed.

Special Projects: Work of a one-time or infrequent nature given to an employee whose normal range of duties would not include the assignment.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- ◆ Review the vacancy announcement one last time to make sure that you are submitting all of the requested forms and the package is completed in its entirety.
- ◆ Make sure that you keep a copy of your application package for future use.

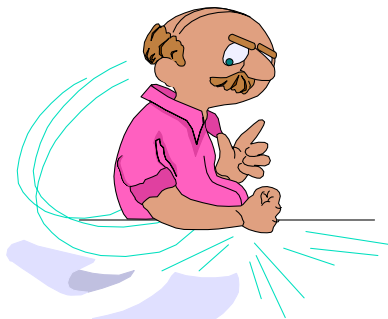
WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE NOT SELECTED

- ◆ Request feedback from the Human Resources staffing specialist if you were eliminated from consideration because you did not meet the qualification requirements or because your score was not high enough to be referred on the selection list.
- ◆ Request feedback from the selecting official, if your application was referred but not selected.

This is not the time to be defensive. If you are angry or upset about not being selected, you may want to wait a few days until you are calm. The purpose of feedback is to learn if:

- 1) there is additional experience or training that would make you a stronger candidate for the position, or,**
- 2) you need to polish your KSAO's**

Don't get mad . . .



Ask Questions ? ? ?



Notes Page

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